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Carson Announces Extension of Federal Unemployment Benefits

***Congressman Carson Only Oklahoman to Support
Unemployment Benefit Extension.***

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Washington, D.C. – Congressman Brad Carson (D-OK) announced a six-month extension of federal unemployment benefits for unemployed workers. An amendment to the Community Services Block Grant bill that authorized this extension of federal unemployment benefits passed the House late Wednesday evening with a vote of 227 – 179, including the votes of 39 Republicans. Congressman Carson was the only member of the Oklahoma delegation to vote in favor of the extension of unemployment benefits.

“The job situation in Oklahoma is more dire at this point than it has been recent memory,” said Congressman Carson. “The extension of unemployment benefits is critical to many who have not been able to find work and would otherwise have no income. This legislation will help these Oklahomans survive until they are able to find work.”

There are currently over 84,000 jobless Oklahomans looking for work. In December of 2003 alone over 4,000 Oklahomans lost unemployment compensation. According to the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC), over 5,000 more jobless workers will lose benefits in each of the next six months. Numbers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that 22,900 of Oklahoma’s unemployed workers are in the Tulsa area and 24,300 in the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area. Oklahoma experienced a net loss of over 18,000 jobs in 2003.

“While the opposition believes the extension of unemployment benefits is unnecessary, I know that for many Oklahomans who have been unemployed for a long time, it is very necessary,” said Carson. “This legislation is an important step towards helping unemployed Oklahomans and the overall economy. In fact, every dollar the

government pays in unemployment benefits results in \$1.73 boost in economic output. This is a good first step toward helping our unemployed workers. ”